

# SKOPE Research Centre

## *Quarterly Newsletter*

Many of us are still at home working, (somewhat) settled into the rhythms and routines that we have developed since the beginning of the pandemic. As the lockdown eased on 17th May in England, with possible further easing following a prime ministerial announcement on the 21st June, I cannot help but wonder which work practices will go back to the way they were and which ones will not. There are many elements that have not changed – research; meetings; teaching – although the mode in which we operate while doing them certainly has. SKOPE's research agenda remains full and a summary of our current projects can be found in this newsletter, as well as activities undertaken by the core team over the last few months. We will continue to hold our meetings online for the foreseeable future, and in line with university guidance, although most teaching has finished for us for this year, we will plan for a return to in-person teaching come the new academic year. Plans are also underway for our SKOPE annual lecture for the new year. In the meantime, we have a SKOPE seminar on the 9th June. Prof Cecile Nieuwenhuizen, the DHET-NRF SARCHI Chair in Entrepreneurship Education at the Johannesburg Business School, South Africa, will be presenting her research on, Student entrepreneurship: learning preferences of entrepreneurs and students. Please see below for further details.

Around this time last year, we postponed **Ewart Keep's retirement event** due to the pandemic. I ask that you save the date of **18th November 2021** for a celebration of Ewart's commitment to SKOPE and achievements in the skills and education policy.

Nothing stands still and it is with a mix of celebration and sadness that we say farewell to Dr Ashmita Randhawa. Ashmita started her DPhil in SKOPE in 2015, and soon began working as our part-time administrator and research assistant doing an excellent job. Since completing her DPhil last year, she has been a research officer working across a number of our projects. Ashmita will be taking up a new role as Innovation and Research Manager at the Digital Catapult North East Tess Valley in Newcastle where she is relocating with her family. Ashmita's professionalism, intelligence, insightfulness, integrity, and humour will be much missed. She is a truly outstanding colleague and I am sure you join me in wishing her well in the next step in her career. Ashmita will continue to collaborate with SKOPE and will become one of our Honorary Fellows.

Susan James Relly  
Director



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### THIS ISSUE:

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## Yidan Prize Conference Series: Europe 2021

SKOPE is organising the **Yidan Prize Conference Series: Europe 2021**. The conference will be held virtually on the **28th May**. It is a partnership between the Yidan Prize Foundation and the Department of Education, University of Oxford. This year's conference will focus on the overarching theme: '*What is innovation in education?*' The conference will honour the achievements of the Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate 2020, Professor Carl Wieman, and the Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureates 2020, Ms Lucy Lake and Ms Angeline Murimirwa from CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education). Further details can be found here: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/yidan-prize-conference-series-europe-2021/> **Register here** [bit.ly/yidanconf2021](http://bit.ly/yidanconf2021) and join SKOPE Director, Dr Susan James Relly, Moderator, at the Panel Discussions.

In addition, the first international Yidan Prize **Doctoral Student Conference** will be held on the **27th May** as a precursor to the main conference. The themes are:

- How will education be delivered in the future?
- What are the skills young people need [in order] to pursue challenges they have? .

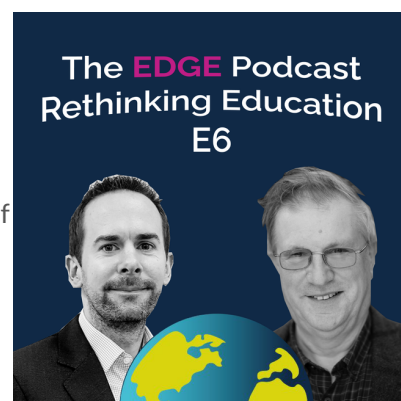
More details can be found here: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/1st-international-yidan-prize-doctoral-conference/>

## Honourable Histories

This report giving a 30 year chronology of FE policy and change was commissioned by the Further Education Trust for Leadership and is now curated and updated by the Edge Foundation.

Your reflections? Listen to the authors Ewart Keep, Emeritus Professor, SKOPE, Department of Education, University of Oxford, and Tom Richmond, Founder and Director of the EDSK think tank.

The Edge Podcast Rethinking Education E6 <https://www.edge.co.uk/news-and-events/podcasts-and-videos/the-edge-podcast-rethinking-education-episode-6/> April 2021



## SkOP - The Skills Observatory Podcast

Re-visit Season 1. Reflect on the seven episodes covering higher education, vocational education and training, the green economy and Covid-19, and a response to the Education Secretary's FE speech. Join us for Season 2 to consider:

- Episode 1: The importance of science education & skills
- Episode 2: The employability agenda in higher education
- Episode 3: The future of technical education
- Episode 4: Teacher education and professional development
- Episode 5: The future of work
- Episode 6: Narrative and narrative skills in business
- Episode 7: Reflections

## Events

**28th May 2021 Yidan Prize Conference Series: Europe 2021 & 27th May 2021 the 1st Yidan Prize Doctoral Student Conference.**  
See News above

**9th June 14:00 (BST)SKOPE Seminar:** Prof.Cecile Nieuwenhuizen, Research Chair in Entrepreneurship Education, University of Johannesburg; research presentation: "Student Entrepreneurship". Visit [www.skope.ox.ac.uk](http://www.skope.ox.ac.uk) for zoom link.

**9th July 2021 JVET Vocational and Technical Education Keynotes Conference.**

Join JVET for an online conference featuring a panel of keynote speakers brought together by the Journal of Vocational Education and Training (JVET) to host a thought-provoking and inspirational online conference.

INFO: [www.jvet.co.uk](http://www.jvet.co.uk) CONTACT: [jvetconf@gmail.com](mailto:jvetconf@gmail.com)

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# Publications

*What future for those NEET?*

**'Singing from the same hymn sheet? UK policy responses to the NEET agenda'** by Sue Maguire (IPR, University of Bath) and Ewart Keep (Department of Education, University of Oxford)  
SKOPE Research Paper No. 130, 2021 <https://www.skope.ox.ac.uk>

This research paper provides an overview of government policy on young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) across the four UK nations. The paper argues that policy in England on this topic is less well-developed and coherent than in the other UK nations, and that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic will serve to amplify the negative impacts of a set of underlying changes that have been taking place in the youth labour market and in employers' recruitment and selection practices. In addition, the paper notes that much of the activity directed at reducing those with NEET status has been funded through the EU's European Social Fund and that uncertainty now clouds the continuance of these schemes, and that in England government has increasingly relied on the charities to help fill gaps in outreach and provision.

**'The role of non-state providers in informal science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education: a Malaysian perspective'**, in the Asia Pacific Journal of Education April 2021  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2021.1908227>

by DPhil Student, Aizuddin Mohamed Anuar, Comparative & International Education, and SKOPE, with Associate Professor Maia Chankseliani, CIE, Department of Education, University of Oxford.

The role of non-state providers in the provision of education has been expanding globally. However, there is a dearth of literature on the role of non-state providers in informal education, especially when delivered alongside formal education in schools predominantly under government purview. Using a mixture of methods designed with surveys and interviews involving 32 non-state providers of informal STEM education in Malaysia, this study provides new empirical material to understand the role of non-state providers in informal STEM education. Non-state providers play a complementary role to the government's provision of formal STEM education through the informal variant, motivated by concerns of posterity and national development. At the same time, instances of political competition and bureaucratic barriers are at odds with the government's aspirations for partnership with non-state providers in order to raise students' interest in STEM.

## Research Projects

We aim to develop research across our four themes: **Sustainability - the Changing Nature of Work – Employability– Policy & Practice**. Current Projects:

### Climate Change Education Futures in India

This project, conducted in conjunction with IISER Pune, seeks to improve climate change education in India and beyond by exploring the impacts of the TROP ICSU (Trans-disciplinary Research Oriented Pedagogy for Improving Climate Studies and Understanding) intervention, asking: How do teachers mobilise new knowledge about climate change after completing an online climate change programme? What barriers do teachers face in their implementation of CCE? How do these teachers conceptualise the ways in which students' future work and employment might engage with climate change?

### Green Skills and the Construction Sector: Building Back better?

This project considers "What counts as green jobs in the Construction Industry?" and will identify green job skills pathways across the construction sector in England. It is conducted in conjunction with the Edge Foundation and The Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford.



## Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for English Law

The project focuses on the take-up and usage of artificial intelligence and allied digital technologies within the legal sector in England. It is delivered via 6 work packages: WP1 Understanding new business models in legal services; WP2 Mapping digital justice; WP3 Frontiers of AI and legal reasoning; WP4 Coordinating skills investment and tech transfer; WP 5 Law and technological education; and WP 6 Mapping the Law Tech and Innovation Ecosystem. For further details go to [www.law.ox.ac.uk/unlocking-potential-artificial-intelligence-english-law](http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/unlocking-potential-artificial-intelligence-english-law)  
SKOPE is involved in delivering Work Packages 4 and 5.



## Narrative and narrative skills in Business

This project examines narrative and narrative skills in business, with a focus on the arts and humanities degrees. Through interviewing CEOs and Chairs from a third of FTSE100 companies, the research maps out current and future skills needs, the changing nature of business, the future of work, key mechanisms of skills formation, and the role that arts and humanities graduates can play in business contexts.



## Understanding the 'Value' of Humanities Degrees

Debates over tuition fees, university finances, and the evaluation of teaching excellence have led to recent increased scrutiny on the potential value of Humanities degrees. Longitudinal Education Outcomes data shows that five years after completion, graduates from Humanities degrees earn significantly less than peers in the sciences or some individuals without degrees. This raises a number of critical questions about the perceived value of Humanities degrees both in terms of individuals' careers and in relation to wider impact in society. Focusing on Humanities graduates from Oxford University, this project examined alumni data to understand graduate labour market outcomes and career trajectories over the last decade

## Driving technical excellence

This project, conducted in conjunction with The Edge Foundation, explores how seven countries – Austria; Brazil; France; Hungary; India; Japan; and South Korea – develop the skills of their technical education workforce to ensure high quality teaching standards. Using a predominantly qualitative methodology the project focuses on three main areas: the purpose of TVET; the art of teaching and training; the future of assessment.



## Mapping the UK Educational Research Landscape

This project examines the UK educational research landscape, mapping modes and drivers of research production, funding patterns, key topics, approaches, stakeholders, and dissemination channels. The research comprises bibliometric analysis of outputs, analysis of key funders, a Systematic Literature Review of research on the UK educational research ecosystem, interviews with key researchers, and stakeholder workshops.

Visit <https://www.skope.ox.ac.uk>

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or would like to share some news, do let us know:  
[skope@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:skope@education.ox.ac.uk)